



All Responsible Officers

23 April 2019

**Action: Respond by 21 May 2019 if you have concerns with the implementation of this work**

**Our ref: RO65/2019 international delivery of regulated qualifications**

## **Information about international delivery of Ofqual regulated qualifications**

Dear Responsible Officer,

We are writing to you to set out how we intend to make it easier for users of qualifications to find out which are regulated by Ofqual and can be taken outside the UK, alongside collection of international certifications data, contributing towards wider initiatives facilitating exports from the education sector.

We will be making three changes:

- A requirement to provide Non-UK certifications data next year;
- A requirement to provide Other UK regions data next year;
- A new field on the Register that shows whether an awarding organisation is 'willing to offer' a qualification internationally.

The context for and details of these changes are set out below. We have explored these options over the last few months with the Federation of Awarding Bodies, the Department for International Trade, at a workshop with a small number of awarding organisations and during seminars at the recent Ofqual AO Conference. There was general agreement with our approach.

### **The context for these changes**

Qualifications are regulated by Ofqual only where there are, or the awarding organisation reasonably expects there will be, some Learners who are assessed wholly or mainly in England. If all of the Learners are outside England, the qualification cannot be regulated by Ofqual. This is prescribed in legislation: it is not a regulatory choice. Regulated qualifications are subject to the same Conditions wherever they are taken.

There are many qualifications which are made available to Learners in England and the rest of the UK as well as to Learners in several other countries worldwide. The international qualifications market is important for many awarding organisations and the size of this market has grown in recent years.

More than 90 awarding organisations already voluntarily provide us with data about the number of certificates they issue to Learners assessed outside the UK each year: these account for over 1.3 million certificates in respect of over 2,600 qualifications. While many of these certifications come from ESOL and Performing Arts Graded Examinations, a significant and diverse range of other qualifications are also frequently certified outside the UK.

Many awarding organisations also voluntarily provide certifications data for qualifications awarded in **Other regions** of the UK including Scotland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man for the purposes of our data collections. This is in addition to our mandatory data collection for certifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

It is important that we treat data about international certifications of regulated qualifications in the same way as data about qualifications awarded in England so that we can regulate effectively, so the risks for international delivery can be properly managed and so we can reflect the whole of the regulated market in our dealings with other bodies (for example with the Department for Education in relation to its qualifications review). We therefore need to know the true scale of the international market in regulated qualifications so that we have a full understanding of certifications of these qualifications.

It is also important for potential purchasers to know whether they might be able to purchase an Ofqual regulated qualification for the international market and to use the Register to do so.

We are working alongside the Department for International Trade (DIT) in this endeavour:

*“The [International Education Strategy](#), published on 16 March by the Department for International Trade and Department for Education, sets out a number of clear actions to support the export of education services and qualifications. This includes an action to provide a clearer picture of exports activity by improving the accuracy and coverage of education export data. At the heart of the International Education Strategy is an ambition to increase the value of the UK’s education exports and to raise education standards both at home and around the world.”* (Department for International Trade statement)

The changes we are making are set out in detail below.

## **Provision of quarterly Non-UK and Other UK regions certifications data**

From January 2020, we will require all awarding organisations to provide quarterly Non-UK certification data (with is currently provided by many awarding organisations on a voluntary basis) as well as Other UK regions data based on the standard data collection [template](#). The format of the data specification will not change. This information will be requested under [Condition B4](#) as we do now with other certifications data. The reporting schedule will not change – the data is included within the usual quarterly data collection. We will update the specification to clarify the mandatory change to the provision of Non-UK and Other UK data. We are planning to report on the data we collect about international certifications in due course.

We would expect that you already collect this data on certifications for your own management information purposes and for the issuing of certificates. We do not anticipate you providing this to us would impose a significant burden.

We would expect you to provide this data on a quarterly basis in January 2020 for quarter 4 (October to December 2019). Please tell us if you will face any difficulties in doing this.

## **New “willingness to offer” field on the Portal**

We will create a new field on the Portal which will indicate your ‘willingness to offer’ particular qualifications internationally. You will need to assign a yes / no value against each qualification. Indicating that you are ‘willing to offer’ a qualification internationally does not mean you are required to do so, it is purely indicative. You would of course need to satisfy yourself that you could maintain proper control over individual Centres wishing to offer your qualifications before deciding to allow them to do so.

We intend to make this new field live on the Portal from 1 September 2019. We will give awarding organisations two months to populate the field for existing qualifications. The field will not need to be completed for qualifications which are close to expiry with an operational end date that is on or before 31 October 2019. Users of the Register will be able to use this field in their qualification searches.

We have considered the timescale the majority of awarding organisations took to amend the qualification type field on the Register last year and consider two months to be reasonable. Please tell us if you would have any problems in complying with this timescale.

Where you already deliver qualifications internationally you should indicate "yes" in the ‘willing to offer’ field. At this stage, we intend to pre-populate this field for you where, in one or more of your certifications data submissions over the last 12 months, you have included data which confirms you awarded a particular qualification to at least one international Learner. Please tell us if you would prefer we did not do this.

We appreciate your ‘willingness to offer’ internationally may change and you will need to update the field at the appropriate point.

### **Action required**

We do not want to introduce changes at a pace which awarding organisations will find difficult to meet. We will consider views from awarding organisations on the implementation of these changes and make final decisions on the timescale in July.

By **21 May 2019** you should let us know:

- If you would face any difficulties in providing quarterly Other UK regions certifications data and Non-UK certifications data for 2019 quarter 4 in January 2020.
- If you will have any problems with completing the 'willingness to offer' field in the two month window from 1 September 2019.
- If you would not want Ofqual to pre-populate the 'willingness to offer' field based on the data you have previously given us.

We hope the changes we are making will help awarding organisations compete internationally by making it easier for users to understand which qualifications you are willing to offer outside the UK.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Collier', with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

**Sally Collier**  
Chief Regulator